

Socialist Worker

For a socialist alternative to New Labour

80p

DON'T ATTACK IRAQ



Demonstration Saturday 28 September

Assemble 12.30pm,
Embankment ☉,
Central London

Called by the Stop the War Coalition
and Muslim Association of Britain.
Supported by CND

BUSH wants to blast Iraq. He has weapons of mass destruction

NO WAR

**BLAIR says we
will pay 'blood price' to back the US**

Opposition to war and Blair's policies at TUC conference *pages 2 and 7*

TUC CONGRESS 2002

PAUL McGARR reports from Blackpool

What they said in the discussion



"BLAIR IS committed to war. The US empire is hell-bent on attacking Iraq to impose regime change.

"It is not about weapons of mass destruction. The UN is being used as a fig leaf.

"The business interests Bush represents want Iraq's oil. We must make a stand. War would mean thousands of people in Iraq who oppose Saddam Hussein would die.

"On 28 September I will be proud to demonstrate against war with our members and our banner. I think the whole trade union movement should be there."

MICK RIX, leader of the Aslef rail workers' union



"WE OPPOSE war on Iraq and we oppose sanctions that have killed some 40,000 children since 11 September.

"We should grasp the fact that the population is with us.

"We should mobilise people to say no to war and to join the demonstration on 28 September."

MARK SERWOTKA, general secretary of the PCS civil servants' union



"THE BRITISH population does not want this war. The trade union movement is no friend of Saddam Hussein—when he gassed the Kurds and was being backed by the US we opposed him.

"But if the US talks of deadlines, why don't they give Ariel Sharon a deadline to get out of the West Bank?"

"Let a clarion call come from this conference: No war on Iraq."

BILLY HAYES, general secretary of the CWU post and telecoms union

Anti-war debate brings TUC alive

THE ANNUAL gathering of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) this week was unlike anything even the most seasoned delegate could remember.

The threat by George Bush and Tony Blair to launch war dominated the opening day on Monday. It led to one of the most important and electric debates ever seen at a labour gathering in Britain.

The TUC has a reputation for being dull, with unanimous backing for pre-agreed resolutions. Not this year.

The TUC general council, its executive, sought to head off a row over the war. It opposed any attempt by Bush and Blair to wage war on Iraq without wider international support.

But it left the possibility of backing war open "if there is evidence generally made available which clearly demonstrates that Saddam Hussein is developing weapons of mass destruction".

It also talked of setting a "deadline for Iraqi compliance" on weapons inspections and of military action as "an option" if backed by the United Nations.

TUC leaders and watching New Labour ministers were rocked when a succession of key union leaders refused to accept this and instead argued hard for total opposition to a war.

Mick Rix of the Aslef rail union told delegates to enthusiastic applause, "There are times when fudge won't do, and war is such an issue."

TUC general secretary John Monks opened the debate, saying, "The UN is the only route to action."



TGWU leader Bill Morris backed up his argument but also felt he had to attack the government.

"One year ago this movement pledged support for the fight against terrorism. We did not sign up for a war against freedom, liberty and democracy.

"I hear the sirens in Baghdad. I hear the cries of women and children. We do not accept the military barons treating the dead as collateral damage. We must say no more war."

However, he also appealed to Tony Blair to "give us the evidence" and agreed that "it is the job of the UN to enforce international law".

It soon became clear that many delegates would not accept the line of supporting a war if certain conditions were met.

Andy Brown of the white collar rail workers' TSSA union moved a call for outright opposition to war—with or without UN backing.

"The US," argued Andy, "has a history of supporting dictators, and Saddam Hussein used to be one of these.

Bribe

"Now he's not a US puppet, they want 'regime change' to impose a more friendly dictator.

"It is not acceptable to say we agree with war if it is backed by the UN Security Council. We know that Bush and Blair are using

every possible threat and bribe to get Russia, China and France in line.

"If we say that if the 'evidence' is there we'll back war, then we are leaving ourselves open to every propaganda trick in the book.

"I appeal to delegates and to people watching on TV to come to the anti-war demonstration in London on 28 September and show the world that Tony Blair does not speak for the British people."

'It won't be Saddam Hussein who suffers'

KEY UNION leaders made the argument against war during the TUC debate (see column, left).

Other delegates also made important speeches.

Fawzi Abraham, who is from an Iraqi background, spoke as a delegate from the Natfhe lecturers' union:

"The general council statement will give the go-ahead for the action planned by the US government and our government.

"It will not be Saddam Hussein who suffers. It will be working people, children, mothers.

"Capitalism is going back to old fashioned colonialism—what else is 'regime change' but the imposition of a puppet government in Iraq as they have done in Afghanistan?"

Keith Sonnet, deputy leader of Unison, spoke in favour of both the general council statement and the anti-war motion.

But it was clear where his real sentiments

lay: "If our 'special relationship' with the US means following Bush and paying a price in blood then I say end the relationship.

"Military action against Iraq has nothing to do with UN resolutions. It's about security of oil supplies."

He added that war on Iraq would "mark a turning point in relations between the Labour government and the trade unions".

Maggie Barton from the Unifi finance union added, "I saw on the news this morning a woman whose brother died on 11 September. She has been to Iraq and is campaigning now to say there should not be a war. If she says that then so should we."

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT rail union, won applause when he said, "There is no excuse for war, for killing people in Iraq who are just like us."

He reminded delegates, "It is the US which used chemical weapons in Vietnam and nuclear bombs in Japan."

Principled motion is only narrowly beaten

THE ONLY speaker to argue hard for backing a war if it had UN support was Roger Lyons, a leader of the Amicus union.

"We must act to prevent Saddam Hussein's regime from unleashing terror abroad," he said.

But delegates hissed him when he attacked anti-war delegates as backing "a resolution that could have come from Baghdad Trades Council".

During the debate TUC leader John Monks realised that the anti-war arguments had won most delegates over. So he sought to play down the differences in his summing-up.

"There are no warmongers here," he insisted. "Our statement is not about paving the way for war.

"It is about empowering the UN."

The general council statement was then passed, but with a significant minority against it.

The crucial vote though was on the TSSA motion opposing any war. To cheers in the hall it was carried on a show of hands.

TUC president Tony Young ruled the motion carried on a hand vote. But he then called a card vote where unions cast block votes in proportion to their size.

"IF JUSTICE was the motive, we would be considering troops to end Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory.

I was standing with those opposing Saddam Hussein when governments in the West were supplying him with arms. Get out on the street on 28 September."

JEREMY DEAR, general secretary of the NUJ journalists' union



"IF BLAIR follows Bush in this crude grab for oil and it results in more civilian deaths, they will be seen by millions around the world as war criminals. Everyone should join the 28 September demonstration.

If there is war there should be mass protests outside bases."

BOB CROW, general secretary of RMT rail union (above)



"I URGE the prime minister, who seems so intent on reordering the world, to deal with the problems here first.

If they can find the money for war they can find the money for further and higher education. Join the 28 September anti-war demonstration."

PAUL MACKNEY, general secretary of Natfhe lecturers' union (above)

Though some big unions—including Unison, CWU, PCS and RMT—backed the anti-war motion, they were outweighed in the block vote by others—crucially TGWU, GMB and Amicus.

The card vote saw the motion lost by 3.4 million votes to 2.4 million.

As delegates left the hall on Monday night the debate was still going on among them.

Most felt that the anti-war case had won the debate, if not the vote, and that the discussion had given the movement to build the 28 September demonstration a real boost.

Blair sails into growing storm

TONY BLAIR is marching towards the deepest crisis he has yet faced.

He is caught in the jaws of mounting opposition on two fronts.

Delegates at the TUC conference this week ripped into his craven support for Bush's war against Iraq, and into the heart of New Labour—profit before people.

They backed the firefighters, who are heading for national strikes next month against low pay. Those union leaders who spoke out echoed the clear majority of people in Britain.

Blair got a lukewarm reception at the TUC on Tuesday as he attempted to derail opposition to the war.

He tried to win support for attacking Iraq by suggesting the United Nations Security Council could back it. But whichever states back war, millions know that it is wrong.

The atmosphere has changed in every workplace, college and community over the last two months.

Everywhere people are talking about politics. Not about arrogant politicians and their lacklustre parties, but about the things that matter, like the war, fighting low pay, and reversing 25 years of the bosses having the upper hand.

People are stirring. Support is snowballing for the mass anti-war demonstration in London two weeks this Saturday. It could be the biggest peace march for decades.

Workers in every industry are desperate to see the firefighters win and open the door to a fight for decent pay for everyone.

Hundreds of thousands of people who have slogged their guts out for 20 or 30 years are raging as one profitable company after another rips up

their pension schemes.

Blair is isolated at home and abroad. He is fuelling a crisis over the war by ignoring what two in three people believe.

He is hardening the mood for action among workers by curbing pay rises and continuing privatisation.

At the same time his government has just handed £410 million to the directors of British Energy, a private electricity giant. That is enough to settle the firefighters' pay claim.

The opposition on both fronts could come together to bury Blair, dealing a huge blow to Bush's global war plans.

It could unleash the pent-up bitterness of five years and more.

It *could* do all that. But we saw this week how TUC leaders like John Monks, and the general secretaries of some big unions, sought to dampen clear opposition to the war.

They lost the argument, but voted through a watered-down motion.

The same pressure for compromise will be on over every battle in the coming months. No one can win those battles for us.

Stopping the war depends on a huge and militant anti-war movement. The size of the anti-war demonstration on 28 September is crucial to building that.

Victory for the firefighters and a revolt over low pay depend ultimately on the determination of 55,000 Fire Brigades Union members and solidarity from other workers.

Every call for action from union leaders (and they are more frequent now) is important because they encourage people to fight back.

It is mass, collective resistance that gives Blair nightmares. Let's give him a taste of that in two weeks time.

A MAJORITY of delegates at the TUC voted to support a clear anti-war amendment, which was lost on a card vote

Picture: PA PHOTOS

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Divisions are hitting home

THE CURRENT state of British politics is weird. Successive governments have enjoyed majority support for the wars they have waged over the past 20 years, from the Falklands onwards.

But now we find public opinion lined up overwhelmingly against the war that George W Bush and Tony Blair are determined to prosecute against Iraq. The opposition stretches right across the political spectrum.

I nearly fell out of the bath last Sunday when I heard right wing journalist Peter Hitchens, who can normally be relied on to be reactionary about everything, say that he didn't think attacking Iraq was a good idea on BBC Radio 4's *Broadcasting House*.

Tory military historian Sir Michael Howard wrote in the *Financial Times* on Saturday last week that "any participation in such a war would divide the nation as profoundly as did the disastrous Suez adventure in 1956".

The comparison with Suez is interesting.

There are important differences. In 1956 it was US opposition that put paid to the Anglo-French attempt to seize the Suez Canal. This time, of course, it is with the US that Blair wants to go it alone.

All the same, then the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser was demonised as another Hitler, just as Saddam Hussein is today.

And, more intriguingly still, the failure of the Suez war brought down the British prime minister, Sir Anthony Eden, who had made overthrowing Nasser a personal crusade.

Iraq today has created the most serious divisions inside the Labour Party for many years.

The *Independent on Sunday* reported that a large majority of MPs support an informal meeting of the House of Commons to discuss the coming war if the government refuses an official session.

According to the Unison union leader Dave Prentis, "There are a number of people in the cabinet, perhaps a majority, who are against military action."

Robin Cook, Clare Short, Margaret Beckett and Alistair Darling have all expressed, more or less, public dissent.

War

When Labour was in opposition Cook and Short were members of the soft left "lunch club" that was unhappy about Neil Kinnock's support for the 1991 Gulf War. Short resigned from the Labour front bench in protest.

To a significant extent the disagreements represent a revival of the division between New and Old Labour. But they go deeper than that.

Mo Mowlam was in at the ground floor of the Blairite "project".

But last week she was scathing about Bush's plans to attack Iraq. Even Peter Mandelson, the prince of darkness himself, has written articles criticising US unilateralism.

Most dangerous for Blair personally is the stance taken by Gordon Brown. Peter Osborne asked in last week's *Spectator*, "Will Brown do to Blair what Macmillan did to Eden at Suez?"

Harold Macmillan was Eden's Chancellor of the Exchequer.

His position on Suez was described as "first in and first

ALEX CALLINICOS writes on the unrest in the Labour Party over war against Iraq

out"—he encouraged Eden to attack Egypt, but quickly jumped ship when the adventure went wrong, and replaced Eden as prime minister.

Last week Brown broke his long silence on the Bush-Blair war drive.

His spokesman announced, "Just as the chancellor has been unwavering in his support for the war against terror since 11 September, so he has consistently made clear his support for the prime minister's position on Iraq."

Most

No doubt this statement followed intense pressure from 10 Downing Street. But this doesn't alter the fact that Brown has carefully positioned himself to take advantage of any cabinet crisis precipitated by a war with Iraq.

It's important to keep these divisions and manoeuvres in perspective.

It's Brown at least as much as Blair who is responsible for the substance of New Labour policy—the public spending freeze of the first two years, the drive to impose the Private Finance Initiative, and the support for neo-liberal policies worldwide.

Nor do the Old Labour stalwarts now sticking their heads above the parapet have any coherent alternative to the ideology of the Third Way.

Remember the 1999 Balkan War, when Cook (who was then foreign secretary) and Short were among the most strident defenders of "humanitarian" warmongering.

From Seattle onwards Short has been an assiduous PR woman for the WTO and free trade.

All the same, the divisions within the Labour Party are of enormous significance.

If Blair continues to press ahead with his support for Bush's war plans, he may be putting his premiership in danger.

More immediately, Blair has split the labour movement from top to bottom. This is the most important difference between the planned war on Iraq and the other wars of the past 20 years.

The bigger the trade union turnout at the anti-war demonstration in London on 28 September, the worse the crisis for the government.

Alex Callinicos is the author of *The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx and a contributor to Marxism and the New Imperialism. Both are available from Bookmarks—phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarks.uk.com*

inside the system

Sins of emission

FORD LIKES to portray itself these days as concerned about the environment.

Its chairman, Henry Ford III, even did a photo-shoot showing him alongside some of the firm's US workers cleaning up a polluted river.

Three years ago Ford said it was moving into a new era by launching production of an eco-friendly electric car which wouldn't emit pollutants.

Last week, as the Earth Summit in Johannesburg drew to a close, Ford quietly announced it was abandoning production of the car.



BRITAIN'S bosses are getting nervous, according to a report by a top legal firm last week.

The DLA law firm compiles an annual report on the state of industrial relations.

It reports that now almost half of Britain's bosses are worried their workers will either strike or hold strike ballots in the coming months.

Let's hope the bosses' fretting turns out to be more than a bad dream.

Major problem for one US hawk

THE US military is having a few problems with its frontline forces.

The captain of the US's most famous aircraft carrier, the *Kitty Hawk*, has been sacked after a series of arrests of crew members for alleged robbery, assault and drug smuggling.

The carrier is based in Japan, though it was stationed in the Arabian Sea during the war on Afghanistan and would play a key role in any assault on Iraq.

In August an officer was charged with assaulting and attempting to rob a 68 year old Japanese man.

Two days later Japanese police arrested another crew member for car-jacking.

Ten days after that another crew member was arrested for drug running.

Capita does the job...

THE FIRM at the centre of the chaos surrounding clearances for teachers and others working with children is Capita.

It runs the Criminal Records Bureau, which handles the clearances, under a £400 million public-private partnership.

Capita's founder and chief executive is Rod Aldridge. He says, "My feelings are much more towards a New Labour agenda than anything else."

He got an OBE, and is a regular supporter of New Labour's £500 a head fundraising dinners. He is also an adviser to New Labour on public-private partnerships.

There is no possible connection between any of this and the following facts:

●As well as the Criminal Records Bureau contract Capita was also awarded the contract for running the government's now collapsed Individual Learning Accounts scheme.

●Capita got the hugely lucrative contract to take over running the TV licensing scheme from the Post Office.

●The firm has also won a string of contracts for local councils and schools, running things like housing benefit.

●Capita has now been awarded the contract for running the proposed congestion charges for London.

There is certainly a connection between those facts and the fact that Rod Aldridge is now one of the 300 richest people in Britain, with an estimated fortune of £97 million.

...blow for New Labour

NEW LABOUR trade secretary Patricia Hewitt has appointed Bridget Blow to a government body which controls millions of pounds of "regional assistance" grants handed to business.

Blow is chief executive of ITNet, a company with some experience of taking public money.

In the London borough of Islington, for example, it has the lucrative contract to run housing benefits.

The firm has recently been fined £40,000 for its abysmal performance.

Patricia Hewitt was clearly not listening to Islington Labour MP and former cabinet minister

Chris Smith, who said, "Labour is committed to cracking down on ITNet and, if necessary, getting rid of them completely."

Obviously he forgot to mention this stance to his colleague Patricia Hewitt formerly of Arthur Andersen, the disgraced accountants.



Every little extra helps

REMEMBER TESCO's "rip-off" Britain campaign?

The supermarket giant accused manufacturers of charging higher prices for goods in Britain than elsewhere.

It staged a court battle with US jeans firm Levi in which the supermarket said it wanted to import cheap jeans direct from the US.

Tesco claimed all it was interested in was customers.

There must have been a few red faces at Tesco last week.

It was revealed that it had been importing goods from abroad at a cheaper price than it would have to pay to British suppliers, but not passing a penny of the saving on to shoppers.

The firm was getting goods like Fairy Liquid, Lynx deodorant and Vileda floor wipes from suppliers in Spain, Italy, Belgium and Greece at up to 10 percent cheaper than its usual British suppliers' prices.

But the prices on the shelves stayed exactly the same with the extra going to Tesco.

THINGS THEY SAY

"Of course, Tribune stands by the official Labour candidate in Hackney. However, some socialists may be glad that it is a secret ballot."

■TRIBUNE, the centre-left Labour magazine, on Paul Foot standing as Socialist Alliance candidate in the Hackney mayoral election

"IS Britain prepared to send troops to pay the blood price of the special relationship with the US?"

■BBC interviewer MICHAEL COCKERELL to Tony Blair on war against Iraq

"THE US need to know, are you prepared to commit, are you prepared to be there and, when the shooting starts, are you prepared to be there?"

■TONY BLAIR's answer while nodding

"THE disaffection with New Labour is so strong that it would be impossible for anybody to win a union election from a pro New Labour position."

■JOHN EDMONDS, leader of the GMB union

"THE US wants to avoid a situation where the Iraqis threaten, much as they did to Kuwait ten years ago, the stability of the world's energy supplies."

■RICHARD HAASS, director of policy at the US State Department

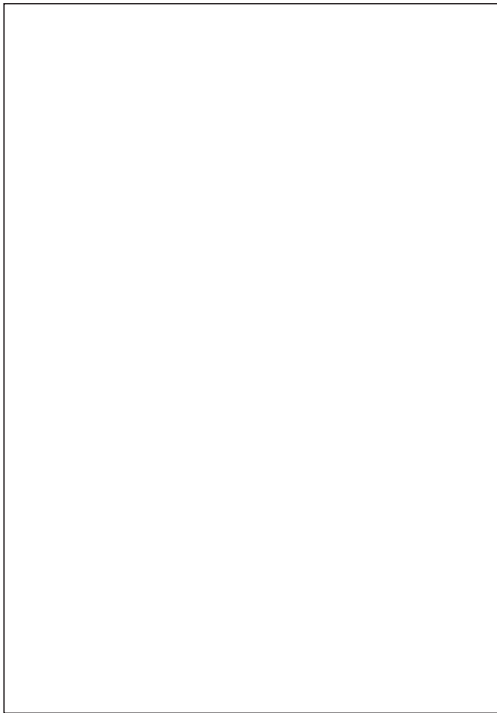
"BNP activists are urged to travel to London to help us put our patriotic, pro-countryside message to the huge contingent of radicalised Middle Britain who will flood central London on 22 September."

■Nazi leader GRIFFIN urging BNP members to join the Countryside Alliance's planned pro-foxhunting march

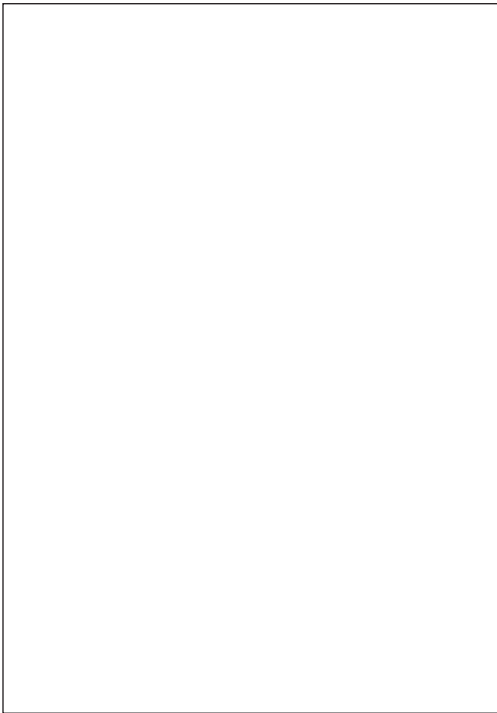
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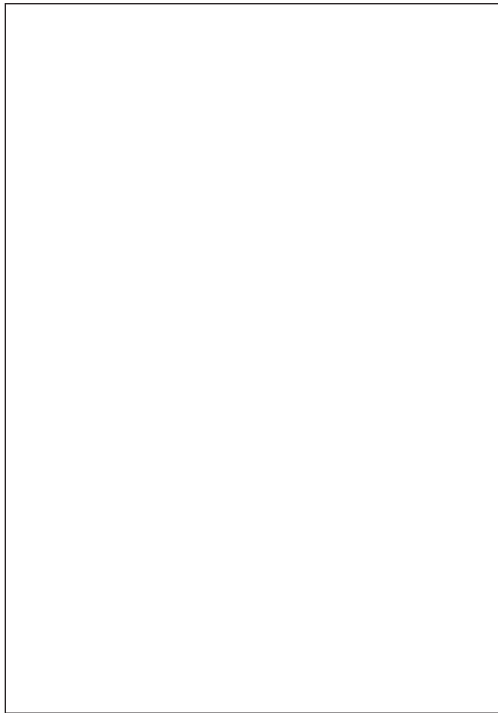
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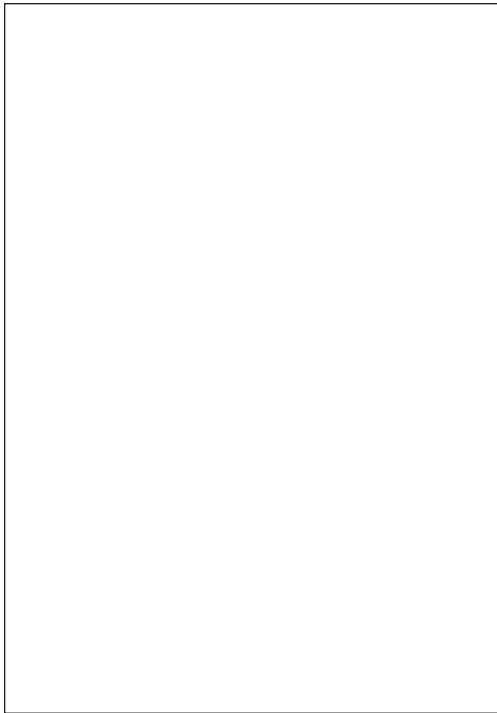
BLAIR: Bush's poodle, chief warmonger in Europe



PUTIN: butcher of Chechnya, linked to gangster capitalists



JIANG ZEMIN: Chinese leader thanks to the bloodshed of Tiananmen Square



CHIRAC: wants to make money from blood spilt for oil

Don't trust these men to stop Bush

In the name of the UN

THE UNITED Nations Security Council authorised the 1991 Gulf War, which left over 100,000 Iraqi people dead.

The UN agreed to sanctions, which killed 500,000 Iraqi children between 1990 and 1998. Over 100,000 have died since.

The UN did not stop Bush's assault on Afghanistan.

Instead it sent in bureaucrats after the bombing to preside over the chaos that is still gripping the country.

It has not been able to get donations from rich states for even the pitiful amount of aid promised to Afghanistan at the start of this year.

Hypocrisy on resolutions

BLAIR SAYS Iraq should be punished because it has broken resolutions passed by the UN Security Council.

But there is no such ultimatum being given to Israel.

Israel has broken even more resolutions than Iraq, including Resolution 242 that calls for it to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories.

But there are no B-52 bombers homing in on Tel Aviv.

Instead the US and Britain are supplying weapons to Israel.

"IT IS okay to go to war as long as there is approval from the United Nations (UN)."

That was the spirit behind a statement from the TUC's general council this week.

It is also what some Labour MPs who have doubts about war against Iraq argue.

But the UN has never been a block on the US or any other big power unleashing its military against weaker states.

The UN is not some democratic body where all states have an equal voice.

Five big powers dominate the Security Council, the UN body that can authorise military action.

The US is the biggest power. The other four states are Britain, France, Russia and China.

They have all shown individually that they are prepared to use brutal methods to get what they want. When they act together they are no less brutal.

Britain

BLAIR SOUNDED like some psychotic Mafia godfather last weekend when he said that Britain's "special relationship" with the US means we will have

'RUSSIA AND China will not stand in the way. France will join in if it has an appropriate UN resolution. We fought the Kosovo War without UN approval.'
● SENIOR BRITISH OFFICIAL

"to pay a blood price" and support Bush's military adventures.

He has allied himself with the most right wing leaders in Europe—Spain's Jose Maria Aznar and Italy's Silvio Berlusconi—to push rampant neo-liberalism and support for US interventions.

Blair is already feeling the pressure of the anti-war movement in Britain, which reflects majority public opinion.

That forced him throughout August to pretend the coming war is about "weapons of mass destruction".

France

FRENCH president Jacques Chirac is a hard right wing Tory, mired in corruption scandals. He attacked German leader Gerhard Schroeder last week for opposing war.

Chirac's main concern is that France should not lose out to the US in the scramble to secure access to Middle Eastern oil supplies.

France participated in the last Gulf War in 1990-1 and the Balkans War, and supported the US attack on Afghanistan.

The French state has traditionally supported some of the most murderous forces in Africa, such as Joseph Mobutu, the former leader of Zaire.

It also aided the Hutu militias which were responsible for the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

Russia

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin is a former KGB officer who is backed by the Russian oligarchy, the gangster-style capitalists who run swathes of the economy.

He rose to power in 1999 on the back of bombing the people of Chechnya. Russian forces destroyed the Chechen capital, Grozny.

They killed tens of thousands of people in the war against Chechnya. They used fuel-air ex-

plosives, which create a firestorm, sucking the air out of civilians sheltering in basements.

Over the last year Putin has tightened the savage repression against the Chechens.

There has barely been a murmur from the US state. It turned a blind eye to Russian atrocities in return for Putin's support for Bush's "war on terror".

China

CHINA IS one of the few states to execute more of its own population than the US does.

The Chinese state has pursued its own "war against terror" over the last year, targeting minorities in the west of the country who want independence.

It has stepped up repression against Tibet, which it has occupied for over four decades. It has unleashed state terror against the Uighurs and other Muslim peoples.

Last week the US government placed the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, a pro-independence Uighur organisation, on its "Foreign Terrorist Organisation List".

The *Asia Times* reports this has "opened the floodgates of Chinese persecution against the Uighur people".

US weapons of mass destruction

BLAIR SAYS weapons inspectors should have unfettered access to any Iraqi government building.

But the US state has refused the same access to its own facilities.

It passed an opt-out to an international treaty on chemical weapons.

This opt-out allowed the US president to bar inspectors from sites.

The US also shattered an international convention on biological weapons last year.

It has biological weapons.

The FBI admits that weapons grade anthrax sent through the post last year originated from a US military laboratory.

The US is the only state in the world that has used nuclear weapons in war—against the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

One nuclear power without inspections

THE WARMONGERS are falling back on the big lie that they are concerned about weapons of mass destruction.

There are weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

But the US and Britain are not demanding that teams of UN inspectors inspect the weapons.

That is because they belong to Israel, their main ally in the region. Israel has 200 nuclear warheads pointed at Arab cities.

The man who revealed Israel's nuclear programme, Mordechai Vanunu, remains in an Israeli prison cell.

The warmongers say Saddam Hussein is a threat to his neighbours. But the only state in the Middle East pushing for war against Iraq is Israel.

Bush and Blair have effectively admitted they want to go to war whether there are weapons inspections or not.

Blair said after meeting Bush last weekend that "inaction is not an option".

His words are almost identical to the most gung-ho members of the Bush gang, vice-president Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld.

Both have said they want "regime change in Iraq"—whether Saddam

Hussein lets weapons inspectors in or not.

Former weapons inspector Scott Ritter, a marine and member of the Republican Party, admits that "UN inspection teams" were riddled with CIA spies when they were in Iraq between 1991 and 1998.

They passed information on to US and Israeli intelligence services, both of which have been authorised to assassinate Saddam Hussein.

The most cynical cry from the warmongers is that Saddam Hussein used "chemical weapons against his own people".

He did, in 1988 against the Kurds in the north of the country.

The weapons were supplied by the West and Russia.

The US and Britain backed Saddam in his war against Iran. That support encouraged him to use chemical weapons.

Scott Ritter says the combination of weapons inspections in the 1990s and sanctions means Iraq is incapable of making weapons of mass destruction.

He said last weekend, "Iraq is today not acting in a manner which threatens anyone outside of its own borders."

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Carnival was a blow to Nazis—and great fun

Myths damage mental health

THOUSANDS OF mental health service users and workers were set to join together to march on Whitehall next Saturday to oppose government plans to increase powers of compulsory treatment.

Now people are outraged to hear that the organisers are attempting to cancel the event.

The Mental Health Alliance have pulled out because of fears about safety in light of tensions following the recent tragic events in Soham.

Apart from surrendering to the legislation, this move will only reinforce the misunderstanding that if someone has mental health problems they are more likely to commit violent crimes.

For many years the government and the media have both fuelled this kind of prejudice.

But people with mental illness are no more likely to be dangerous than any other

group. The new laws will further stigmatise and marginalise people.

They will mean that people who have committed no crime but have the dubious label of “severe personality disorder” will be at risk of indefinite “preventive” detention.

It will also be much harder for people who use community services to refuse treatment that they do not believe is helping them.

Mental health workers and service users have long campaigned to increase resources available to people and reduce the need for compulsory treatment.

Last year 2,000 people lobbied parliament against the proposals. Service users and supporters are still planning to march next Saturday.

The Mental Health Alliance should support us.

□ **JOHN COOPER, community mental health nurse, Birmingham**

Why are poor left starving?

ABSOLUTE FOOD shortages are rare. Rich people never starve. Poor people do.

But this is true of countries too. The bitter background to every famine in Africa is the poverty of the country suffering it, and the Western societies that are so unprepared to share their wealth.

All this is happening in an age when the money and technology are available to provide succour for everyone in a matter of weeks.

Why are the US, Britain and the rest of Europe not

doing much more?

Only one thing is missing—political will. The will of the rich powers to intervene and end what is nothing short of an international obscenity.

In years to come it will seem inconceivable that in 2002 help was not forthcoming for millions of suffering people on this planet.

□ **JOHN SCOBIE**

No place at TUC

CHARLES KENNEDY will be the first Liberal leader allowed to formally address the TUC conference for over 100 years in a treacherous breach of the 1890s conference resolutions.

What democratic consultation did John Monks engage in before inviting him to take up precious time that could be better deployed?

Here in the supposedly affluent south the Liberal Democrats have often been in municipal or county control.

What a record of incompetence and contempt for working people that has been!

In Eastbourne they have reneged on promises to permit tenants associations and ordinary folk a direct say at council committees about real social crises.

These include dilapidated council house stock and whole families on benefits put in cramped, high-rent bed and breakfast accommodation for profiteering landlords.

□ **LARRY ISLES, Eastbourne**

or send to

SOME 6,000 call centre workers have been balloted for strike action over jobs

Cut off Reality bosses' profits

I AM one of the 6,000 call centre workers employed by Reality who were balloted for strike action over a threat to cut our jobs.

I voted yes to strike. Reality is a multi-million pound catalogue company owned by Great Universal Stores.

Reality wants to increase those profits by outsourcing call centre work to India. It may then try to sack some of us.

This company just uses workers in Britain and India.

In the call centre I work in, it's imperative that you spend the maximum amount of time on the phone.

Qualifying for a bonus scheme is

all calculated through how much “personal time” you take off at work.

Your personal time must not exceed 9 percent of your time on the system. In a four-hour shift you cannot have more than 20 minutes off the phone.

Compete

If you take up more time, the manager's bonus goes down, which they shout about. And you won't get any bonus, which is calculated quarterly.

In that shift you are probably making 75 to 150 calls to the public.

At least 6 percent of these must be converted to sales. In Reality, as in most call centres, you are assigned to a team and a manager. You then compete against other teams for the highest and

best figures.

All outgoing calls are for the same purpose—to cajole people into placing an order.

These are ordinary people who don't have much money.

Many customers have entered a free prize draw. They get a catalogue, which they didn't ask for. We call them and they think they might have won the draw, but instead we are trying to get them to buy something.

A job in Reality is slow and monotonous.

We face a bullying company and I hope we take action that will make them sit up and notice the workers for once.

□ **REALITY CALL CENTRE WORKER**

Solihull's houses are not for sale

AFTER THE overwhelming vote against the transfer of council homes into the private sector in Birmingham, nearby Solihull council has dropped for at least a year its plans for transfer.

A growing campaign was emerging in Solihull.

At a recent estate meeting tenants voted unanimously against the council representatives and their privatisation plans.

Another significant

factor may have been the government's latest review of council housing finance.

Due to the pressure from tenants' and residents' groups and the votes against transfer, the government has been forced to rethink the way it has been starving councils of money to put in their homes.

□ **LUKE HENDERSON, Birmingham**

Inspiring health workers' strikes

THE TWO victorious strikes by health workers in Scotland show us what can be achieved by determined rank and file action.

Striking Unison union members working for the multinational Sodexho at Glasgow Royal Infirmary won a return to NHS terms and conditions.

Then health workers at the Royal Inverclyde and Royal Alexandra hospitals went on unofficial strike and won a pay rise of £5 an hour.

This is a fantastic boost

for our campaign for a living wage in east London.

Unison members working for Medirest in Tower Hamlets and ISS/Mediclean at the Homerton and Whipps Cross hospitals have already lodged a claim for NHS pay and conditions for contract workers.

In Tower Hamlets we are meeting to discuss action if these companies reject our claim, and we are inviting a speaker from Scotland.

□ **JIM FAGAN, joint branch secretary, Tower Hamlets Health Care Unison**

WE WORK in north London as postal workers, and together with friends and families about 30 of us travelled to Manchester for the “Love Music—Hate Racism” carnival.

Our own branch of the CWU union is affiliated to the Anti Nazi League and they keep us up to date with what's happening as regards the British National Party.

As postal workers we have a proud tradition of opposing the delivery of Nazi hate mail—their election leaflets.

The carnival gave us the chance to mobilise people with a clear anti-racist message around music.

All the artists reminded us of why we were there, especially Heartless Crew and Ms Dynamite.

On the journey up on our coach we received a briefing about the problems with the Nazis in Burnley.

On the way back people had gained not only an enjoyable day but also satisfaction that around 30,000 people had given a clear message against the Nazis.

We hope to have played our part in giving people in Burnley the confidence to organise and support the holding of a carnival in Burnley.

We all loved the music, and we all hate racism.

□ **NW1 BARNBY STREET POSTAL WORKERS DELEGATION**

Next stop Burnley?

WE ARE three sisters from Burnley who went to Manchester for the Anti Nazi League carnival two weeks ago.

We joined the march that went from Manchester city centre to Platt Fields Park, where the carnival was.

There were 3,000 people on that demonstration. It felt really good to march and show everyone that people can mix together—Asian, black and white.

It would have been even better if we could have been able to hold that march and carnival in Burnley, because that's where the British National Party have three councillors.

But the local council refused to allow it to happen. We really hope there can be a carnival in Burnley next time.

After the march people carried on to hear the carnival acts. There were 30,000 people there, just enjoying themselves and listening to loads of famous singers.

We all had a really good day and our friends are wishing they could have gone too.

□ **NAZIA, RHAZIA and KUSHI BEGUM, Burnley**

postal point

■ **JUDY COX is quite right to argue that a lower speed limit would save far more children's lives than a witchhunt of paedophiles** (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August).

But she could go further. The panic engendered by events like the Soham tragedy means that children are taken everywhere by car instead of being allowed to walk.

This not only blights kids' lives, it makes the roads even more dangerous.

Papers promote not just the fast car culture but the insidious culture of guilt that says parents are failing their children if they are not car owners.

□ **IAN BIRCHALL, North London**

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TUC: NEW ANGER AT LABOUR'S POLICIES

Bitterness on the home front

WAR MAY have been at the centre of the debates that rocked the TUC congress, but it was far from being the only issue where unions and the government seemed set on a collision course.

The prospect of the first national firefighters' strike for 25 years, anti-union laws, and attacks on workers' pensions all surfaced on the first day of the conference.

Firefighters' delegates were set to leave the TUC early—to hold their own special conference to decide on a ballot for a national strike over pay.

They received unanimous and enthusiastic backing from the whole TUC congress, including from the leadership in the general council.

Firefighters' FBU union general secretary Andy Gilchrist was applauded as he rose to address delegates: "We've been patient for 25 years on pay, and for five years of this New Labour government.

"Tony Blair says our claim will destabilise the country. It won't damage the country or destabilise the Middle East. War with Iraq will."

"There is no merit in denying us decent pay because other public sector workers are so badly paid—that needs addressing too.

"Our members are not a special case, but they are special people. We will put the sword to low pay in the

by **PAUL McGARR**

fire service this year."

TUC general secretary John Monks said, "The FBU have sought our full support. We give it unanimously and hope congress responds positively to the FBU call for help."

In an earlier debate on anti-union laws RMT general secretary Bob Crow won one of the best receptions of the opening day when he pledged solidarity action with the firefighters.

He demanded "the total repeal of every single aspect of the anti-union legislation brought in by the Tories and not repealed by the Labour government".

The TUC unanimously passed a motion backing a demonstration next spring pressing for increased union rights.

Bob Crow argued, "The TUC is calling a public rally. Let's hear from the Italian workers, the Spanish workers. They walked out and went on the streets. That's what the British trade unions should do."

The pensions timebomb

THE THREAT to workers' pensions was a key issue.

TUC deputy general secretary Brendan Barber spelt out the background to what is likely to become an explosive issue in the coming months.

"We face a pensions crisis and it's getting worse as each day passes.

"There is a headlong retreat by so many employers from high quality final salary schemes."

Over 200 firms have already shut such schemes.

And according to figures from the bosses' CBI organisation, another 120 are now considering stopping the schemes.

Some close off schemes to new workers, meaning they get lower pensions when they retire.

Instead of pensions based on a proportion of your final salary, employers and the government want to move to "money purchase" pensions.

These depend on the ups and downs of the stockmarket. Millions of workers could be hit.

"These moves represent



STANDING FIRM—firefighters rallied in Glasgow last week

And he demanded solidarity action for the firefighters. His union, he said, was seeking safety guarantees from management on London Underground in the event of a firefighters' strike.

If these weren't adequate—as they were unlikely to be—"there won't

be one single underground train running."

In every union people should start organising to deliver solidarity with the firefighters.

In many cases safety could be an issue—and you don't need a ballot to stop work on jobs that are unsafe.

the most serious real cuts in pay and conditions since the Second World War," said Brendan Barber.

John Marris is from the ISTC steel workers' union in Scunthorpe.

Workers at the Caparo steel plant in the town, and at similar plants in Wrexham and Tredegar, have been staging strikes over an attack on their pension scheme.

Decent

"We are the first union to take action over this. I ask delegates for support in this vital struggle.

"It is a fight for justice, and for a decent retirement," he said.

TUC leaders and many unions are pushing for guarantees on pensions.

They want employers and workers to be forced to pay into pension schemes.

Of course existing pension rights must be defended, with strikes where employers threaten them.

But some unions and delegates pointed to the real answer to the pensions crisis.

New Amicus leader says no to 'sweetheart' deals

DEREK SIMPSON, newly elected general secretary of the Amicus engineering union, won a warm reception when he addressed a fringe meeting.

He beat Sir Ken Jackson, who was rightly dubbed "Tony Blair's favourite union leader".

Jackson continued a tradition pioneered by the EETPU electricians' section of the union in the 1980s, of pushing for "sweetheart" deals with employers.

These were often single-union and effectively "no-strike" deals.

These left workers with ineffective union rights, protection and organisation.

Simpson signalled his intention to break from this approach and fight to return to proper trade unionism.



DEREK SIMPSON

"We have to have both eyes on what the members want and not one eye on what the government wants and one eye on what employers want," he argued.

"We will ballot our members in any factory where they have got a

sweetheart deal.

"If the members vote for us to do it we will do everything to end these deals and seek a proper recognition agreement.

"I reject these deals, which my union has regrettably been involved in in the past.

"We've been undermining other unions and it's a disgrace.

"I invite other unions—let's have a contest—not a 'beauty contest' to see who can best suit the employers, but a competition to see who can get the best deal for workers."

These welcome words should be a signal for activists in Amicus to begin rolling back the damage and to begin to build effective union organisation.

Speaking out against Nazi threat

THERE WAS an excellent debate on fighting racism and fascism.

Speakers warned of the threat posed by Nazi groups like the BNP, and the need to defeat them in Burnley, where they won three councillors last May.

Speakers also attacked the way the policies and rhetoric of the government often undermined the fight against racism.

Dave Anderson of Unison, a Labour Party member, argued, "The far right feed off our members being

in a society passing them by.

"The political refuge for these members has traditionally been the Labour Party—now no longer seen as our saviour from despair but seen more likely as the cause of it.

"It is on this fertile ground that the far right rats will breed."

A motion calling for demonstrations against the BNP in the Greater Manchester area was carried unanimously, as was a call for the TUC to initiate a national "Defeat the BNP" campaign.

Edna Greenwood, a GMB delegate, told congress, "I live three miles from Burnley and am an active member of the Anti Nazi League.

"On 1 September the ANL organised a carnival. It was supposed to be in Burnley but the Labour council wouldn't sanction it.

"So we had it in Manchester and it was fantastic—thousands of people sticking their fingers up at the Nazis.

"We do need a big demonstration now, not in Manchester, in Burnley. The TUC should come to Burnley."

'Blair's out of touch'

BITTERNESS with Tony Blair and New Labour was evident among the overwhelming majority of delegates.

And the depth of that anger was often greatest among people who were still members of the Labour Party.

Pat Buttle is an Usdaw shop workers' union member. "Blair has more in common with capitalist management than he does with my members. We have to unite and defeat Blair's attacks on working people," she said.

"It's my first TUC and I'm a Labour Party member," explained Chris O'Sullivan, a Unison member.

"People are feeling angry. What the hell does Blair think he is doing? He's just out of touch."

A counter to Martin Amis's new book

MARTIN AMIS'S book *Koba the Dread* has caused a storm of comment. Its subject is Stalin, socialism and the possibility of social change.

He argues that the reality of Stalin's crimes has been largely ignored, especially by the left.

Amis is not simply a nasty right winger. His *Einstein's Monsters* was a sustained assault on the horrors of nuclear war.

Much of his fiction is (at least partly) a comment on the emptiness of a money-obsessed society.

That just makes the latest book seem even more appalling.

It is a strange mixture of personal memories, rows with friends and an attempt to write history. Sometimes this jars badly.

In one passage Amis tells how he was so discomfited by the crying of his six month old daughter that nanny had to be summoned to take charge.

"The sounds my daughter was making', I said unsmilingly to my wife on her return, 'would not have been out of place in the deepest cellars of the Butyrki Prison in Moscow during the Great Terror.

"That's why I cracked and called the nanny'."

Really? A child's tears, and torture? Who is trivialising the past here?

The historical debate about Stalin is hardly new—although Amis often gives the impression that he is revealing a hardly-glimpsed truth: "Have you heard? Stalin was a bloody tyrant!"

But it has real relevance today.

Amis not only wants to bury any lingering admiration for Stalin.

He wants to close the door on the entire project to fundamentally change the world by revolutionary means.

He denounces the revolts of 1968 and after for being "revolution as play".

That is hardly a fitting description for the biggest general strike in history in France, for the movement that swept the US black ghettos, for the demonstrations and resistance that helped to end the Vietnam War, and for the toppling of dictatorships in Portugal and Greece.

He moves on to say that the "afterlife" of that movement today is "anarchistic, opposing itself to the latest mutation of capital: after imperialism, after fascism, it now faces globalisation."

A large part of his argument is the insistence that Bolshevism led to tyranny right from the start.

He writes, "Lenin and Trotsky did not just precede Stalin, they created a fully functioning police state for his later use.

"October 1917 was not a political revolution riding on the back of a popular revolution. It was a counter-revolution."

This aspect of the book has secured it a warm welcome even from those who recognise its weaknesses.

Tribune columnist Paul Anderson calls Amis's book "riddled with factual errors" and says it "barely deserves to be taken seriously".

But at the same time he thinks "Amis is on to something" because, says Anderson, "embrace Bolshevism and you embrace terror—however reluctantly or abstractly."

THE TRADITION that Socialist Worker stands in always strongly rejected the idea that Stalin's Russia was any sort of socialist society.

For us Stalin was the gravedigger of the revolution.

He was the leader of a bureaucracy which climbed to power after the defeat that followed the revolution's failure to spread beyond Russia.

Under Stalin Russia was a state capitalist society where the bureaucracy acted in accordance with the same dynamic of accumulation as the private owners of Western capital.

But it is important to look at what actually happened in 1917 and afterwards.

Amis is cavalier with facts and

RUSSIA'S LEADER Stalin (right) with Churchill and US president Truman in 1945

STALIN

Did the 1917 Russian Revolution have to end in tyranny?

Was Stalin the same as Hitler?

Charlie Kimber replies

dates in his book.

But it is much more worrying that he uses tainted sources about Stalin's record.

Amis relies almost entirely on a few right wing historians such as Robert Conquest (who advised Margaret Thatcher) and Richard Pipes (who advised Reagan).

The collapse of the USSR enabled historians to examine secret police files for the first time.

Historians such as R W Davies and Alec Nove took part in an immensely detailed study of the truth about Stalin's crimes.

They found plenty of evidence of murder on a terrifying scale.

There were, for example, 353,000 executions in 1937 and 293,000 the following year.

The number of people in the prisons and labour camps rose from 2.5 million in

1933 to 5.5 million in 1953, with a death rate up to nine times that among the population outside.

This implies a toll of perhaps two million deaths over a 25-year period.

The famine that was the result of collectivisation in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan led to as many as five million further deaths.

But the cumulative death total, however shocking, is a long way short of the 20 million that Amis quotes or the 40 million which he says is possible.

More importantly, there is an immense difference between the scale of repression during the years immediately after the revolution in 1917 and the period of Stalin's rule.

In 1921 the total number of executions was 3 percent of the number in 1937.

There were 100 times as many people

in the camps in 1936 as before 1928-9, the year when Stalin consolidated his rule.

The level of repression immediately after the revolution was much lower than in the US today. This was during a time when the revolution was fighting for its life against internal opponents backed by armies from 14 different countries.

THE QUALITATIVE shift in repression from Lenin's era to Stalin's was a symptom of a much more crucial break.

During Lenin and Trotsky's time there was democracy in the Bolshevik Party and the workers' councils (soviets) and women won the right to divorce and abortion.

Also oppressed nationalities had the right to break away from the old empire, and workers had influence on industrial and social policy.

The ultimate aim of everything was international revolution.

Under Stalin all democracy was smashed, women's rights disappeared, Great Russian nationalism rode triumphant over the minorities, workers were stripped of all power and the ultimate aim of everything was "socialism in one country"—building up the Russian state.

Amis sees continuity between these two eras.

In truth there was a total gulf.

Amis talks about a "collapse in the value of human life" after the Russian Revolution. He should look at the history of imperialism, of what the European powers did to Africans and Asians.

He should look at the First World War where, in the interests of capitalist competition, tens of millions were sent to slaughter one another.

But Amis is not interested in accounts that suggest the truth is more complex than he paints it.

He boasts, "No, I haven't read Isaac Deutscher's *The Prophet Armed* and *The Prophet Unarmed* and *The Prophet Outcast*...Trotsky was a murdering bastard and a fucking liar. He was a nun killer, they all were."

Amis also leaves out the reality that it was the left who first unmasked the real nature of Stalinism.

Marxists such as Trotsky, Boris Souvarine, Victor Serge, C L R James and Tony Cliff denounced Stalin when he was tolerated or feted by much of conventional opinion.

Tories like Winston Churchill were happy to carve up the world with Stalin.

THERE ARE times in the book when Amis equates Stalin with Hitler. Certainly both were murderous opponents of genuine socialism. But there were still important differences between them.

Stalin's barbarism was a result of his determination to industrialise Russia through the bloody methods used to carry the industrial revolution through in countries like Britain.

There was the same use of force to drive the peasants from the land, the employment of child labour, and terror against those who might resist.

Stalin carried through in a couple of decades what had taken 300 years to achieve in Britain. The result was a death toll enormously concentrated in time.

The death toll in the labour camps was probably much lower than that of the Atlantic slave trade, but took place over 25 years, not 250 years.

The death toll through famine in Ukraine and Kazakhstan was certainly lower than in the famines that resulted from the British pillage of Ireland and India.

Stalin's barbarism against the minorities was not genocide in the Nazi sense of the killing of a whole people because of their alleged ethnic characteristics.

Nazi barbarism was not just directed at its political enemies or those who opposed its schemes for increased exploitation.

It was above all concerned with diverting the frustrations of a middle class hit by economic crisis into a crusade to exterminate the whole of Europe's Jewish population, along with Gypsies, gays and others.

Hitler did not merely build labour camps like Stalin's in which large numbers died from brutality and neglect.

Hitler built death factories.

Those who supported him wanted to see that Holocaust carried out beyond Germany.

In contrast the people who looked to Stalin, however misguidedly, wanted an end to Hitler's barbarity.

Against Amis we argue that revolution, far from inevitably leading to tyranny, is a process that can bring about the end of suffering and the liberation of humanity.

in my view

Fall of the bland brand

"WE MAKE the music, they own it," is an old saying jazz musicians often quote.

"They" are the record companies.

Music is big business. Sony Music sold in excess of \$14 billion worth of music last year. Five major corporations control 94 percent of all records sold.

But according to City analysts the good times may be coming to an end for music retailers like EMI, Sony and Capitol.

The latest figures from the British Phonographic Industry show that year on year sales have fallen by 15 percent.

And recent research has shown that the decline in music sales across the Atlantic has intensified faster than the fame of a *Pop Idol* winner.

Nielsen Media Research has found that US sales have fallen by 13 percent so far this year. This comes on top of a 7 percent slide in 2001.

The world's top five music markets—the US, Japan, France, Germany and the UK—make up three quarters of global sales and are either in or close to recession.

Fear is sweeping the music industry.

I don't know about you, but when I'm in a bit of a panic I talk nonsense. This is exactly what the music industry seem to be doing. Their researchers have come up with two explanations for the fall in sales.

Firstly Alan Giles, the chief executive of HMV, said, "Believe it or not the World Cup had a very big distracting effect on regular music buyers. This had something to do with the kick-off times and people staying in the pub all day."

Funny! I thought kick-off times were 7.30 in the morning and certainly no later than midday. I probably buy more records than most, but I don't ever remember buying one at 7.30 in the morning!

Industry's mouths

More seriously, this doesn't explain the fall in CD sales in the US. When the *New York Times* conducted a survey of its readers it found that only 2 percent of them even knew that the US team was playing in the tournament.

The other reason cited is the massive rise in CD piracy—especially in South East Asia and North Africa.

I have just come back from a holiday in Morocco. I can vouch that there is a massive amount of bootlegging of music going on. You can buy CDs of your favourite artists for less than a pound!

But there is also a lot of poverty as well.

The average Moroccan manual labourer earns less than 25p an hour. After a week's work a labourer could just about afford the latest Oasis album at European prices.

I don't think the world's poor are to blame for taking food out of the record industry's mouths.

The real reason is that working people in the US, Japan and Europe are feeling the pinch.

A growing number of workers are rightly worried about issues like unemployment and job security. Therefore the first things that people are cutting back on are so called "luxury items" like CDs.

There's another reason.

A couple of weeks ago the *Guardian* newspaper revealed that record companies pitch their sales of CD singles to 14 year olds and below. The result has been a glut of bland manufactured bands.

Unbelievably HMV and Virgin continue to wonder why fewer and fewer people venture into their stores.

Rap, jazz and so called world music have seen significant increases in CD sales in the past few years.

I wonder if that had anything to do with the quality of music—or was it just the World Cup?

by MARTIN SMITH

tv



THE PALESTINIANS face daily humiliation at Israeli checkpoints

A moving film for Palestine

PALESTINE IS Still The Issue, the new film by the journalist John Pilger, is a rarity on TV.

by RACHEL ALDRED

It is a painfully honest documentary that refuses to toe the established political line.

John Pilger will be familiar to many *Socialist Worker* readers as a witness and a fighter for truth and justice. This is his latest project. It is about the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian resistance to it.

Some of the film's most powerful moments come in the description of the everyday brutality of the occupation.

The Israeli army would like to see itself as a "defence" force battling terrorists.

But pictures of what was the Palestinian culture ministry obliterate that illusion. Israeli soldiers destroyed computers wilfully, smeared shit on walls and equipment, and even vandalised

children's drawings.

In these and many more unrecorded acts of vandalism, they attack the possibility of any kind of normal existence in Palestine.

Fatima Abed-Rebo lost her baby when she was held up at an Israeli army checkpoint. She says of the cruel way the soldiers treated her, "It wasn't personal. This is the way they treat all Palestinians."

Palestinians have resisted this state terrorism.

Even within the Israeli army some dissent has appeared—over 500 soldiers have refused to serve in the Occupied Territories.

The film examines the motivation of those who are driven towards suicide attacks.

Wafa Idris, the first female suicide bomber, was an ambulance

volunteer—an extremely hazardous occupation in Palestine where the Israeli army regularly attacks medical crews.

In the horrific aftermath of suicide bombings in Israel, ambulances zoom up and down to pick up the dead and injured.

Humiliated

But in Palestine ambulances are often prevented from reaching the injured and dying. Wafa Idris saw so much death and destruction that she could not take it any more.

Some Israeli victims of the suicide attacks have spoken out against the occupation. Most of Rami Elhanan's family were murdered in the Holocaust.

He lost his 14 year old daughter after an attack by a suicide bomber in Israel.

"It doesn't just come out of the blue," he says. "The boy whose mother was humiliated in the

morning at the checkpoint will commit suicide in the evening.

"The bomber was a victim, just like my girl. Of that I am sure."

We see the immense disparity between the poverty of the Palestinian areas and the lush suburban Israeli settlements guarded by massive military force.

Maps show just how little was offered to the Palestinians during the peace process, despite the enormous concessions made by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Seeing this film will make you angry, but don't feel helpless.

The anti-war demonstration in London on Saturday 28 September is also in support of Palestine.

Pilger's film shows exactly why everyone should be there.

■Palestine Is Still The Issue is to be broadcast on ITV1 on Monday 16 September at 11pm.

radio

Elephants are on the march



Picture: JESS HURD

THE WRITER and comedian Mark Steel is returning with a new series of his brilliant *The Mark Steel Lecture*.

Mark picks six major figures from history and describes the impact they have had on society.

The opening programme focuses on the composer Beethoven.

Another programme looks at Hannibal, who travelled from North Africa with 37 elephants to attack the Romans in Italy.

■The Mark Steel Lecture begins on Wednesday 18 September on BBC Radio 4 at 6.30pm.

MARK STEEL

tv

Many colours

by MATTHEW COOKSON

IF YOU'VE spent the last two years planning to read Zadie Smith's novel *White Teeth* you can now take a shortcut.

Channel 4 has turned the highly popular novel into a four-part series.

It is about the way that people from different backgrounds mix in modern Britain.

Archie is an indecisive Englishman who can only make a decision after tossing a coin. Samad is a proud Bangladeshi man.

Clara is a young woman from Jamaica who meets Archie after breaking free from her mother's strict Jehovah's Witness religion, and Alsana is a fiery Bangladeshi woman.

The story revolves around their and their children's relationships in

multiracial Britain.

White Teeth starts in the London of the 1970s.

Archie, Samad, Alsana and Clara's story takes us through to the turn of the millennium. It deals with race and racism in a very funny and sensitive way.

Unfortunately, the TV programme does not have the same depth and subtlety of plot and character as the book.

Despite this *White Teeth* is a very entertaining watch.

■White Teeth begins on Channel 4 at 10pm on Tuesday 17 September.



INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence.

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbians and gays.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We urge all those who agree with our policies to join with us in the struggle to build the revolutionary party.

Marxist forums

The Socialist Workers Party is hosting Marxist forums across England and Wales. Why not come along and join in the discussion?



ANGEL
Is the US all-powerful?
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, The Tup, Liverpool Rd.
With Helen Shooter.

BAYSWATER
Labour Party policy and the rise of Islamophobia
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Coffee Island. 30 Westbourne Grove (opp Saqi Books). *With Hassan Mahamdallie.*

BIRKENHEAD
11 September: the war on terror one year on
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Oxtan Green Community Centre, Christchurch Rd. *With Paul Sillett.*

BLACKWOOD
The USA, imperialism and war
Mon 23 Sep, 7pm, Blackwood Miners Institute.
With John Molyneux.

BLOOMSBURY
Can we save the planet?
Wed 25 Sep, 7pm, Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St.

BRENT
Capitalism.con
Sun 22 Sep, 3.30pm, Willesden Library Centre, 95 Willesden High Rd. *With the Walrus* (Socialist Review columnist).

BRIGHTON
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?
Sun 22 Sep, 7pm, Phoenix Community Centre, Phoenix Place. *With Judith Orr.*

BRISTOL GLOUCESTER ROAD
Are women equal in the 21st century?
Sun 22 Sep, 3pm, Casa Sudacca, Zetland Rd.

BRISTOL TOTTERDOWN
The Middle East, oil and war
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Sunflower Cafe, YMCA, Wells Rd.

BURNLEY
Woomera breakout: video showing
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Shalamar, Church St. *With speaker from Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers.*

CAMBRIDGE
Iraq, war and imperialism
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Jaffe Net Cafe, Mill Rd.
With Maxine Bowler

CALEDONIAN ROAD
How can we regenerate the cities?
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Shillibeers, North Rd (off Caledonian Rd). *With Ester Leslie.*

CANTERBURY
The Middle East, oil and war
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Canterbury Wholefoods, Jewry Lane.

COLCHESTER
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?
Mon 16 Sep, 8pm, RAD, Southway. *With Jim Jepps.*

CRAWLEY
Media power: can we control it?
Wed 25 Sep, 7.30pm, Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.

CREWE
Is racism getting worse?
Wed 18 Sep, 7pm, Crown, Earl St.

CROYDON
How can we save the planet?
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Spice Cafe, Surrey St.

EALING
Stockmarket meltdown: is capitalism in crisis?
Thu 19 Sep, 7.30pm, Drayton Court, The Avenue, West Ealing. *With Alexis Wearmouth.*

EAST HAM
Can we stop capitalism destroying the planet?
Thu 12 Sep, 6.30pm, Barveens cafe, St Johns Rd (opp car park).

EXETER
Labour and the unions: is the honeymoon over?
Sat 21 Sep, 4pm, Dinosaur Cafe, Queen St (nr clock tower).

GLOUCESTER
The war on terror one year on: who's terrorising who?
Thu 12 Sep, 5.30pm, Cafe Marx, The Warehouse, Parliament St. *With Joe Cardwell.*

GREEN LANES
Iraq, oil and imperialism
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Cafe Delices du Jour, Green Lanes (cnr Hewlitt Rd).

HACKNEY ALBION ROAD
Islam and Islamophobia
Sun 15 Sep, 5pm, Hawksley Court Community Hall, Albion Rd. *With Bruce George.*

HACKNEY DALSTON
Is US imperialism all-powerful?
Wed 18 Sep, 7pm, Tan-Ta-Na cafe, 4/4a Crossway (off Stoke Newington Rd).

HACKNEY HOMERTON
Is racism in Britain getting worse?
Thu 19 Sep, 7.30pm, Chat's Palace, Chatsworth Rd. *With Dean Ryan.*

HACKNEY SHOREDITCH
Imperialism: the armed wing of globalisation?
Thu 12 Sep, 8pm, Barley Mow, Curtain Rd. *With Yuri Prasad.*

HACKNEY LORDSHIP & STAMFORD HILL
Kazimir Malevich and the art of the Russian Revolution
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Cyprus House, Manor Parade. *With Chanie Rosenberg.*

HACKNEY WICK
Why does Bush want to attack Iraq?
Sun 22 Sep, 4.15pm, Quality Cafe, 244 Morning Lane (nr Well St Market). *With Sam Birnie.*

HUDDERSFIELD
Socialism and war
Thu 12 Sep, 6pm, Coffeevolution, Wood St.

ILFORD
9-11 one year on: who's terrorising who?
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Icon Bar & Restaurant, 262 Ilford High Rd.

IPSWICH
Terrorism: the response of the dispossessed?
Mon 16 Sep, 8pm, Cafe Marx, CAB, Tower St.

LADBROKE GROVE
Antonio Gramsci and the search for a new proletarian order
Tue 24 Sep, 7.30pm, Green Room, Paddington Arts Centre, Woodfield Rd. *With Chris Bambery.*

LEEDS BEESTON
Revolution: is it possible?
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Sth Leeds Learning Centre, Gipsy Lane (nr Cockburn High School).

LEEDS CHAPELTOWN
Women and globalisation
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, West Indian Centre, Laycock Place.

LEEDS CITY CENTRE
Trotsky and the united front
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Swarthmore Centre (opp Park Lane College). *With Dick Pitt.*

LEEDS HAREHILLS
After the Earth Summit: can we save the planet?
Thu 19 Sep, 7.30pm, Pakistani Community Centre (next to mosque).

LEEDS HEADINGLEY
What are the roots of Zionism?
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, All Hallows Church, Regent Terr (off Hyde Pk Rd).

LEICESTER
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?
Mon 16 Sep, 7.30pm, Mozart Cafe, London Rd.

LLANELLI
Palestine: an eyewitness account
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Park Community Project, Inkerman St.

LUTON
Science under capitalism: working for people or profit?
Mon 16 Sep, 7.30pm, Co-motion coffee bar, Thistle Hotel (nr Arndale).

LUTON BURY PARK
The bloody history of imperialism in the Middle East
Thu 19 Sep, 7.30pm, Bury Park Community Centre, Dunstable Rd.

MANCHESTER CENTRAL
Globalisation, women and the family
Sat 21 Sep, 3pm, Unitarian Chapel, Cross St.

MANCHESTER CHORLTON
How can we save the planet?
Sat 14 Sep, 3pm, Nehmat Hadah Curry House, 30 Manchester Rd.

NORTHAMPTON
After the Earth Summit: can we save the planet?
Thu 19 Sep, 7pm, Cafe Msaada, Kettering Rd (nr Picturedrome).

NOTTINGHAM CITY CENTRE
Is the US all-powerful?
Tue 17 Sep, 1pm, Rat and Parrot, Wollaton St.

NOTTINGHAM HOCKLEY
Why is Bush so determined to attack Iraq?
Tue 24 Sep, 7pm, Vam's Bar, Broad St (opp Broadway Cinema).

NOTTINGHAM HYSON GREEN
Why does Bush want to bomb Iraq?
Tue 17 Sep, 7pm, Hyson Green Community Centre, Gregory Blvd.

NOTTINGHAM SHERWOOD
Can big business save the planet?
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, The Place, Melrose St.

OXFORD
One year of the war on terror: who's terrorising who?
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Mitre, High St.

PRESTWICH
What would socialism be like?
Sun 15 Sep, 3pm, Caribbean Retreat, Clifton Rd.

READING
Is Britain a classless society?
Sat 14 Sep, 4pm, Reading International Solidarity Centre, London St.

ROCHESTER
Is capitalism destroying the planet?
Thu 12 Sep, 8pm, Eon Internet Cafe, Rochester High St.

ST ALBANS
Why does Bush want a war with Iraq?
Mon 16 Sep, 7.30pm, Trinity Church, Victoria St.

SHEFFIELD BURNGREAVE
Martin Luther King: can peaceful methods change a violent world?
Mon 23 Sep, 7.30pm, Yemeni Centre, Burngreave Rd. *With Steve Smith.*

SHEFFIELD CARBROOK OFFICE WORKERS
After Johannesburg: can we save the planet?
Wed 18 Sep, 5.30pm, Carbrook Hall pub, Attercliffe Common.

SHEFFIELD CASTLE COLLEGE & ALL SAINTS
Iraq, war and imperialism
Wed 18 Sep, 4pm, "Censored" Bar (formerly Treadmill), Leadmill Rd. *With Sam Caldwell.*

SHEFFIELD CENTRAL
Lenin and the Russian Revolution
Sat 21 Sep, 4pm, Coffee Revolution, Church St.

SHEFFIELD CRYSTAL PEAKS
Islam and Islamophobia
Mon 16 Sep, 7.30pm, Art Space, Crystal Peaks library. *With Aiman Nazaal.*

SHEFFIELD DARNALL
The return of the rank and file?
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Darnall and District Medical Aid Society, Fisher Lane. *With Padraig O'Kelly.*

SHEFFIELD HILLSBOROUGH
Can we stop Bush and Blair's war
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Burton Street Project, Burton St.

SHEFFIELD NORTON & MEADOWHEAD
The war on terror: who's terrorising who?
Wed 25 Sep, 7pm, Norton pub, Meadowhead.

SHEFFIELD SHARROW
Welfare or warfare: what's Blair's priority?
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Simunye Cafe, London Rd.

SHEFFIELD WOODHOUSE
The war on terror: who's terrorising who?
Thu 26 Sep, 7pm, Bowles Clubhouse, Woodhouse Rec.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH & HAMMERSMITH
Why does Bush want to attack Iraq?
Thu 19 Sep, 7.30pm, Cazbar, 24 West 12 Shopping Centre (opp Shepherd's Bush ☹). *With Chris Bambery.*

SOUTHAMPTON
US imperialism: is it unstoppable?
Mon 16 Sep, 7.45pm, Freedom Cafe, High St. *With Chris Bambery.*

STOCKPORT
Vietnam to Iraq: how do we stop US imperialism?
Thu 19 Sep, 7pm, Stockport Central Library.

SWANSEA
After the Earth Summit: can we save the planet?
Thu 19 Sep, 7.30pm, Uplands Diner, Uplands Cres.

TOOTING
Noam Chomsky and the politics of resistance
Tue 17 Sep, 7.45pm, Derinton Road Community Centre, Derinton Rd. *With Shaun Doherty*

TOWER HAMLETS
Labour and the trade unions: is the honeymoon over?
Tue 24 Sep, 7.30pm, Coffee@Brick Lane.

WATFORD
Will capitalism destroy the planet?
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, West Watford Community Centre, Harwood Rd.

WOOLWICH
You Are G8, We Are Six Billion: book reading
Thu 26 Sep, 7.30pm, Tramshed, Woolwich New Rd. *With Jonathan Neale.*

Contact socialists near you

- Barnsley**
☎ 07881 558 590
- Birmingham**
☎ 07949 028 362
- Black Country**
☎ 07941 834 125
- Bradford**
☎ 07811 403 299
- Brighton**
☎ 07808 368 551
- Bristol**
☎ 07711 718 519
- Cambridge**
☎ 07950 142 464
- Cardiff**
☎ 07788 770 741
- Central London**
☎ 07957 316 094
- Chesterfield**
☎ 07881 558 590
- Coventry**
☎ 07712 047 873
- East Anglia**
☎ 07946 269 024
- East London**
☎ 07753 697 743
- Exeter**
☎ 07939 558 115
- Hackney**
☎ 07813 135 922
- Home Counties**
☎ 07905 589 865
- Kent**
☎ 07950 610 257
- Lancashire East**
☎ 07968 952 180
- Lancashire West**
☎ 07931 725 633
- Leeds & West Yorkshire**
☎ 07757 491 497
- Manchester**
☎ 07946 413 763
- Merseyside**
☎ 07951 241 562
- North London**
☎ 07957 209 057
- Norwich**
☎ 07733 137 201
- Nottingham**
☎ 07956 477 778
- Plymouth**
☎ 07803 620 390
- Portsmouth**
☎ 07801 290 411
- Sheffield**
☎ 07905 678 506
- South East London**
☎ 07951 737 003
- South London**
☎ 07939 017 973
- Southampton**
☎ 07811 210 036
- Swansea**
☎ 07759 901 392
- Thames Valley**
☎ 07929 618 579
- Tyneside**
☎ 07748 653 627
- Waltham Forest**
☎ 07796 697 271
- West London**
☎ 07958 996 777
- York**
☎ 07956 237 270

For more details of events phone the SWP national office on 020 7538 5821 or e-mail enquiries@swp.org.uk
Socialist Worker supporters in Scotland are members of the Scottish Socialist Party.
For events in Scotland phone the SSP on 0141 221 7714.
Phone the **Socialist Worker** Platform (part of the SSP) 07855 023 739.

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

To join the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send it to PO Box 82, London E3 3LH

Name

Address

.....

PostcodeTrade union/college/school

PhoneE-mail

A refugee is murdered as the Nazis organise

What's happening in Sunderland?

THE MURDER of an Iranian refugee in Sunderland two weeks ago has shocked many local people.

Peiman Bahmani was stabbed in the street he lived in at 3.40pm. He died later in hospital. A man has been charged with murder and racially aggravated assault.

The tragedy shows what happens when the Nazis gain a foothold in an area by whipping up racism, and provide a false focus for ordinary people's frustration and discontent.

It also shows that the press and politicians' anti-refugee hysteria is encouraging racism.

Sunderland was once a prosperous part of the north east of England.

Its shipyards, mines and engineering factories provided work for generations of local people.

That feeling of security was wiped away when the last Tory government attacked these industries. The main employers in Sunderland closed down, driving tens of thousands of families into poverty.

As one pensioner told *Socialist Worker* last weekend, "We used to have so much—the shipyards, the pits. But Thatcher did away with all that 20 years ago. She crippled us."

Sunderland is now one of the most deprived areas in Britain.

Nearly half of Sunderland's 25 wards are in the top 10 percent of the most deprived in the country.

People in Sunderland are more likely to suffer ill health and be educationally disadvantaged when compared to the national average.

The area's official unemployment rate is 8.6 percent, according to TUC figures released in June. The national rate is 3.2 percent.

The Nissan car plant is one of the few examples of the "new economy" in the area. But it's no substitute for the industries that used to employ whole families.

Even these jobs are not "safe".

Last weekend's *Sunderland Echo* reported that the

HELEN SHOOTER
reports

electronics company LG Philips may sack 1,100 workers in its north east plants to profit from even cheaper labour in the Czech Republic.

The city's population is declining.

Those who remain feel insecure, robbed of opportunity and that their plight is ignored by authorities locally and nationally.

High profile regeneration schemes have provided more shops in the city centre and improved parks.

Eager

But, as Susan, a local resident, said, "the projects being set up won't undo 20 years of destruction of the local area."

"It's going to be a much longer haul to make people feel the benefit of any regeneration here."

The Nazi British National Party (BNP) has been eager to capitalise on this feeling of discontent.

It stood in six wards in Sunderland in the election this year. In two wards it got 28 percent and 19.7 percent of the vote.

The BNP is trying to scapegoat asylum seekers in the area.

New Labour selected Sunderland and Newcastle as one of the key areas to dump asylum seekers into without providing any resources.

Private landlords apply to house refugees and get paid for doing so.



REFUGEES MARCHED in protest at Peiman Bahmin's murder two weeks ago

In Sunderland they can buy several run down houses in a street for around £15,000 each, and then cram refugees into them.

The landlords rake in profits but there are no extra services for refugees and local people.

The Nazis have seized on this to whip up racism.

The police admit there has been a 154 percent rise in reported racist incidents between 1998 and 2001.

Yet many refugees say the police have not taken their reports of racial harassment seriously.

"I live two streets away from where Peiman Bahmani was killed," said Stella.

"I'm black and occasionally I get racist comments but I'm known in the area and have many friends."

"There are pockets of racists who are organising."

"The racists prefer to hit the softer targets which are the asylum seekers. When refugees move into the area they are a visible group. The racists coax people by saying they will force us out of our houses."

"These asylum seekers are mainly housed by private

landlords who have a contract with the government. The refugees are known to live in certain streets."

"They are not given support, and there was no attempt to explain to the local community what was happening."

"We regularly get leaflets from racists through our doors which argue, 'Let's get all the blacks out of here'."

The example of Sunderland shows that racists can become more confident in a climate where refugees are singled out nationally as a "problem", and then dumped in deprived communities which are denied extra resources.

New Labour's policy towards refugees is encouraging the Nazis to organise.

BBC gives BNP free publicity

BBC RADIO 4's morning news programme *Today* interviewed the BNP's youth organiser, Mark Collett, last week.

Collett claimed the BNP was planning to hand out 100,000 leaflets nationally to school students.

He said it was launching this in Eltham, south east London, last week. This was the area where Stephen Lawrence was murdered.

The Radio 4 interviewer did not refer to the

five serious racist attacks that have happened in the area over recent weeks.

The Anti Nazi League (ANL) organised a protest against the leaflet launch. The BNP did not turn up.

It will have been very happy to receive free publicity from the BBC for its racist plan.

The *Today* programme ignored the ANL carnival in Manchester the previous day which brought 30,000 black and white people together.

Local people rally to support refugees

SOME 200 people joined a march last Saturday to show local opposition to the Nazis, and in support of refugees.

Sean Kelly, the social services convenor for the local branch of Unison, spoke at the rally.

"When we met last week the whole of the union branch committee was shocked at what had happened to Peiman Bahmani."

"Virtually everyone on the committee is white but we understood what damage racism and attacks like this one will do."

"We voted to affiliate to the Anti Nazi League for the first time after

the elections this year because of the deep concern at the vote the BNP Nazis got."

"We voted to back any initiative to support refugees."

Countries

"We have set up a fund, initially with a £500 donation, to support refugee campaigns and help with hardship."

Two local pensioners spoke to *Socialist Worker* about why they support refugees in the area.

Katie explained, "It's disgusting what happened to that poor

asylum seeker."

"We wouldn't want to be treated like that if we lived in their countries."

"How would we like it if what has happened in their countries should happen over here?"

Her friend Mary added, "I have a refugee family living at the house which backs onto my garden. I think they're wonderful and we get on really well."

"The father has come over the back of my fence to help me do my garden. I think people should mix together more and not talk about getting rid of refugees."

Stop the Nazi march

THERE IS outrage across Burnley at the British National Party (BNP) plan to hold a march on Saturday 21 September.

Burnley Trades Council has called a counter-demonstration and is linking up with the Anti Nazi League's protest.

The BNP Nazis are trying to pose as defenders of the city's old people's homes.

Labour-run Lancashire County Council announced

earlier this year that it wants to shut 35 of the 48 homes. Some 19 of these homes are in east Lancashire, which includes Burnley.

"We don't want the BNP to speak for the protest we have been making since January against the homes' closures," said Alice Thornber, one of the homes campaigners and a Labour councillor in Gannow ward.

"We will not let them

hijack the campaign."

The local Unison union is planning a stall this Saturday in Burnley to build for the protest.

■ **Stop the Nazis' march: Saturday 21 September, assemble 10.30am, Central Library, Peace Gardens, Burnley.**

■ **Join Unison members leafleting for the protest, this Saturday, 14 September, from 11am, at the bandstand, Burnley town centre.**

In brief

College staff set to strike

BRANCH SECRETARIES in the Natfhe union were to meet on Friday of this week to discuss more strikes over pay by further education (FE) college lecturers.

The union's FE committee is to meet on 21 September to confirm future action.

Unison and other unions representing FE support staff are balloting for strikes.

Activists in Natfhe are arguing for both a joint strike (probably on 5 November) and also using the lecturers' existing vote for action to hit college bosses earlier.

Natfhe branch reps in London are also set to call for a ballot for strikes over London allowance payments at a meeting next week.

A suggested date of 28 October for a one-day strike would provide the chance for a strike alongside school teachers, who are also set to ballot in London over the same issue.

Easy win for action

CAN THERE ever have been a more decisive strike vote? Just one person voted against strikes among baggage handlers at Luton airport employed by Easyjet.

They are in dispute over an imposed 1.3 percent pay deal. The TGWU is also demanding recognition by the company.

At present it deals only with Amicus. Amicus backs the TGWU's demand for a joint agreement covering both unions.

TGWU leaders have put on hold a strike ballot among Easyjet cabin crew at Luton, Gatwick, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast while the negotiations take place this week.

It would have been better to get this ballot going to up the pressure.

Burning for better pay

OVER 180 workers at the Interfloor Limited rubber plant in Dumfries, in Scotland, have voted to strike over pay.

The workers, members of the GMB union, are furious at their bosses' refusal to consider a substantial pay increase.

The workers are now set to strike next Wednesday.

'Let us sign petition twice'

THE Save QE2 Hospital Children's Ward campaign took to the streets again last Saturday with mass petitioning in the town centre of Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

Campaigners collected around 1,300 signatures, bringing the total to over 15,000.

Activist Win Smith said, "People are so angry they want to sign it twice! They can't understand why Blair has enough money for war but not enough to care for our kids."

Protest against pool trials

A SOLIDARITY lobby was planned this week to show support for the people who are facing serious charges arising from the Govanhill pool occupation last year.

In particular the verdict is expected in the case of 16 year old Qasim Khan who is alleged to have assaulted police.

Of the nine people facing charges, six are black.

Vigil at Glasgow sheriff court, 2pm, Friday 13 September.

Postal workers

Union leaders are dithering, but build a big vote for action

POSTAL workers across Britain have begun a strike ballot at long last.

It has been called by the CWU union in opposition to management plans to launch a joint venture with one of Britain's nastiest multinationals.

Bosses want to transfer CWU union members in the Romec cleaning and maintenance section to a new company 49 percent owned by construction group Balfour Beatty.

After weeks of delay the ballot began last week.

It is a great opportunity to defend public services against the privatisers.

But there is an air of unreality about the process because

the union machine is awash with rumours of a deal that will stop a strike.

In fact, despite intensive efforts by CWU deputy general secretary John Keggie, no deal had been agreed at the start of this week.

There is furious debate inside the union's postal executive over whether to accept any proposals that nod through the privatisation of Romec.

One section of the executive argues that the privatisation should be allowed if there are sufficient concessions over workers' transfer rights.

Another section on the executive does not want to accept privatisation at any cost.

One member of the executive

told *Socialist Worker*, "It's time to stand and fight on the whole issue of joint ventures, 'liberalisation' of the market and the government's policy of allowing private operators to take more Post Office work."

"It is no good looking just at the issue of what happens to workers transferred to Romec. There is a bigger agenda which needs to be confronted."

The postal executive was due to meet on Wednesday of this week to discuss developments in the dispute.

There is a great danger that while activists are watching the manoeuvres at union headquarters the ballot will get forgotten.

If the strike ballot has a very low turnout or is even lost, the right in the union leadership will use this to force through a rotten deal.

The ballot covers everyone who works in the Post Office. It closes on Thursday of next week, 19 September.

Every activist must campaign to get a big vote for strikes. They must also pressure the union executive to oppose any move towards a joint venture or privatisation.

Deliveries

THE TRIALS of the new delivery system have been extended because of the immense problems they have caused.

The CWU union has agreed a seven day extension, and a further three weeks could be granted.

The trials have exposed the reality that the new system is all about making delivery staff work harder in order to boost profits.

Workers have become exhausted delivering all the day's mail in one trip rather than two.

Royal Mail introduced pilot schemes in 14 areas across Britain at the end of July, and they were due to end last weekend.

Only those addresses which receive more than 20 items a day are guaranteed deliveries before 7am.

All other deliveries are carried out between 9am and 1pm. Workers are now expected to do four hours non-stop rather than the two and a half they used to do.

Defend Phil Billows

HOSPITAL campaigners and health workers were set to hold a lunchtime rally on Thursday of this week.

They are fighting the huge planned PFI scheme at the Barts and Royal London Hospital trust and in defence of Unison union branch secretary Phil Billows.

Phil has been suspended from his job and barred from trust premises.

Campaigners believe this is a clear attack on trade

union rights and an attempt to stop the resistance against PFI.

Hospital workers in Unison are currently balloting in an indicative vote about whether they are prepared to strike to defend the union if Phil is sacked.

Rally—Defend Phil Billows, Keep Our Hospitals Public, 1-2pm, Thursday 12 September, on the steps of the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel Road.

Councils

AROUND 30 Unison union members staged a lobby of Liverpool City Council controlled by the Lib Dems last week.

They were protesting at what they see as management's victimisation of a Unison union convenor and a senior shop steward.

A meeting of 50 shop stewards agreed to set a date for a mass meeting for members to decide the union's response.

Messages of support to Unison, City of Liverpool branch, 4th floor, Produce Exchange, 8 Victoria Street, Liverpool L2 6QJ.

NEW PAMPHLET

BRILLIANT! OUT HE GOES!

Which way forward for Amicus after Jackson?

Available from Socialist Worker industrial office. Phone 020 7987 1919

£1

Westminster council



STRIKERS HAVE been let down by their union leaders

'We have been betrayed'

WESTMINSTER Unison members are very angry and hurt by the decision by our union, both regionally and nationally, to instruct us to return to work.

Union leaders called the return to work after a seven-week strike by nearly 300 Unison members against Westminster Tory council's plans for wholesale privatisation of services.

This decision came after the council initiated legal action against the strike, using the anti trade union laws.

But if the national and regional union had followed the strategy of the local branch, this legal action would not have happened.

We originally voted for 800 workers to come out on all-out indefinite strike against the Tory council's privatisation.

But Unison's National Industrial Action Committee instructed us to follow a programme of rolling industrial action.

This strategy laid us open to the council using the anti trade union laws against us.

We could have won this dispute. The council was in real trouble because of the action by workers in Planning, Environmental Health, Parking and Building Control.

But it called Unison's bluff and the union leadership called the action off rather than face a court case.

This has allowed the council to defeat us in our fight over privatisation and pensions.

National union leaders disgracefully left it to the local

regional officer to tell us of their decision. We were told national union officers did not want to face the wrath of strikers.

The union leadership should have made this strike a big national issue, but it completely failed to do so.

It did not send one letter to get backing from other Unison branches or other trade unions.

It did not carry a single article in any of the union's publications during the strike.

The role of strikers has been magnificent—and every one should be congratulated.

The strikers have now mandated the local branch and region to start an immediate rebalot for industrial action.

Some workers argued that regional and national Unison officers, including Unison general secretary Dave Prentis, should come down to the branch to campaign for it.

The branch committee and the strikers have instructed the Westminster Unison branch officers to send out a letter to every branch in the country raising the issue at every level of the union.

They passed a vote of no confidence in national Unison leaders and our regional Unison officer.

And they also demanded that our national union leaders campaign for the Labour government to repeal the anti trade union legislation, and if it doesn't, to withhold funding for the Labour Party.

RAHUL PATEL, assistant branch secretary Westminster Unison (personal capacity)

Schools



Picture: JESS HURD www.reportsocialist.co.uk

ACTION IN March was popular

DOUG McAVOY, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), is to authorise a ballot for one-day strike action in London over allowances for working in the capital.

NUT leaders say the ballot will take place before half term and they hope the NASUWT, the second largest teachers' union, will also vote for action on London allowances.

News of the ballot will cheer NUT members in London, who staged a vibrant one-day strike before Easter.

But limiting the ballot to a vote for one day of action means there is no clear strategy from the top of the union to win.

NUT activists are organising to build the mood for strikes and to pressure their leaders to call further action.

Round-up

PARENTS, PUPILS and teachers are celebrating their successful campaign to save two Liverpool schools.

St Mary's and Holy Cross community schools are not to be closed as the Liberal Democrat council first announced several months ago.

A series of protests, and lobbying councillors, has ensured victory. Campaigners are now looking to save four other Roman Catholic schools which are threatened with closure.

PARENTS, PUPILS and staff at Lowfield Primary School have begun a new

campaign to stop the closure of the school.

The campaign won a victory earlier this year, forcing the council to say it was reversing its closure plans.

However, on the first day back after summer holidays, the now New Labour council said it would close the school.

The Hands Off Lowfield campaign has regrouped to fight the closure. We have launched a petition, called protests and will be holding weekly stalls in Sheffield city centre.

ANGELA SHANN, Lowfield parent/Sharrow Socialist Alliance

Museum workers

A NEW pay deal is being put to 150 cleaners, gallery attendants, information desk staff and security staff in the PCS civil servants' union who work in the Museum of Scotland.

Management's new offer follows the threat of strike action.

Albie O'Neill, PCS negotiations officer, said the offer is

worth an average 17 percent increase over three years.

"This would see the lowest paid, currently earning £9,600, have their wages increased by 20 percent," he said.

The PCS is recommending workers reject the offer. The ballot closes on 20 September.

Rejection of the offer could lead to industrial action.



Saturday 14 September

● Conference on the political fund, 1pm, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place, Newcastle. Phone 07801 743 444. Organised by Unison United Left.

Sunday 15 September

● *The Battle of Chile*. Screening of the brilliant three-part film about the coup in September 1973, 2pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London.

Monday 16 September

● Bristol peace vigil with Tony Benn, 5.30-6.30pm, opposite Hippodrome, Bristol city centre.

Saturday 28 September

● Stop the War Coalition

national demonstration. Assemble 12.30pm, Embankment, London. Phone 07803 620 390 or go to www.stopwar.org.uk

Saturday 12 October

● Socialist Alliance conference on the euro. South Camden Community School, Charrington Street, London. Phone 020 7791 3138.

● Education workers unite!

A conference for all school workers, 12 noon-4pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London. Organised by Ealing NUT.

● Scrap Trident national demonstration, 12 noon, Plymouth Hoe. Overnight accommodation available Friday. Phone 07803 620 390. Called by CND.

Thursday 7 November-Saturday 9 November

● European Social Forum, Florence, Italy. Phone 020 7053 2072 or go to www.mobilise.org.uk for transport. To book your place go to www.fse-esf.org

ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN BY 12 NOON MONDAY

Firefighters

This weekend sees crucial battle begin

FIREFIGHTERS AND control room staff were in confident but angry mood in the run-up to their union's recalled conference in Manchester this week.

They are confident as indications flood in from across Britain that 55,000 FBU union members are prepared to vote overwhelmingly to strike over pay.

They are angry because the government is taking a hard line in an effort to stop firefighters heading a wider revolt against low pay in the public sector.

Tony Blair said last week that meeting the FBU's claim would "do terrible damage to the economy".

His government minister Nick Raynsford arrogantly announced a "review" of fire service pay, even though FBU members have rejected that along with their employers' insulting 4 percent pay offer.

Incredibly, Lord Bain has been chosen to chair the review.

He headed the Low Pay Commission which lived up to its name by setting a minimum wage of just £3.60 an hour with a lower rate for young people.

FBU general secretary Andy Gilchrist says, "Our members are clear that they deserve the going rate for the job they do today, which is £30,000, and we are therefore not going to get caught up in a so called independent review of the fire service."

The firefighters' pay fight is heading towards a confrontation with the government that will be very

'Other unions should be preparing now to give full and active support'

important for everyone.

Bob Crow, leader of the RMT rail union, has told rail managers to meet union concerns about safety in the event of a firefighters' strike.

It is a step towards a dispute with London Underground, the Tyne and Wear Metro and the Merseyside network which would allow RMT members to ballot for strikes alongside the FBU.

Mick Rix, leader of the train drivers' union, Aslef, has written a similar letter to mainline train operating companies.

The army unit nearest the Channel Tunnel, based at Shorncliffe, said the army would "definitely not cover tunnel emergencies".

Aslef and the RMT have rightly said their members will not work in the Channel Tunnel if safety is compromised.

This is the kind of soli-



NO ROUTINE dispute—there is real energy behind the FBU's pay claim

arity that every union leader should be raising and acting on now.

Every trade union member can build the momentum behind the firefighters by inviting FBU members to speak at their workplace and union meetings.

Firefighters know they face a serious battle with

the government. FBU activists are already engaged in a healthy debate about whether to go for a series of stoppages or an immediate indefinite strike.

There is no doubt that indefinite action would put the government's army scab plan under huge strain, just at the time when it is

looking to deploy troops in the Gulf.

The bigger the vote for strike action and the greater the active support for the FBU's campaign, inside and outside the union, the more confidence firefighters will have to take action that can win quickly.

Palestine

OVER 600 people gave a magnificent kick-off to the campaign against Israeli sporting and cultural tours on Wednesday of last week. They protested against the football "game of shame" between Scotland and Israel under-21s in Hamilton.

The *Scotsman* reported that "300 police and 90 stewards were on duty in and around the ground, more than were used at the Champions League final."

The protest was organ-

ised by the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Muslim Association of Britain.

From now on the Israeli state can only field teams in Scotland behind a wall of police.

The demonstrators showed creativity in getting round the Strathclyde police threat to arrest anyone holding a Palestinian flag inside the ground.

They brought coloured balloons to form a makeshift one.

Buses

DRIVERS ON Edinburgh's main bus services have voted decisively for strikes over pay.

Over 75 percent of drivers voted for action, despite a union recommendation to accept a 5 percent offer.

More than 1,300 drivers at Lothian Buses, owned by the council, were to decide this week what action to take in support of their 12 percent pay claim.

Action would have a big effect. About half of the city's commuters travel by bus.

Rail

WORKERS ON Arriva Trains Northern (ATN) are buoyed up by news that their long-running series of strikes is hitting the company's balance sheet hard.

Bob Davies is chief executive of Arriva Group, the transport empire that has the Arriva Trains Northern franchise.

He told the *Financial Times* that each of the 18 days of strike action on ATN has knocked £200,000 off the company's profits.

That adds up to £3.6 million so far this year. "That's more than the £2 million we were told by our management," one RMT rep on ATN told *Socialist Worker*.

"And it's not including the

money Arriva has lost through cancellations due to the ban it put on us working overtime on rest days.

"The figure would be higher still if the government's Strategic Rail Authority had not waived fines on the company to help it beat us.

"We need solidarity to see this to the end."

Activists in the RMT union are pushing for regular collections for the Arriva workers, who are due to strike on Saturday of next week.

■Donations to the Arriva strike fund are urgently needed. Send c/o RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

First North Western

DRIVERS ON First North Western trains struck for 48 hours for the third time on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week.

Members of the Aslef union were joined by drivers in the RMT, who voted by 29 to one for action.

"The mood is definitely hardening," says RMT rep Steve West.

"People are really angry with the company and it's clear the Strategic Rail Authority is telling it to take a hard line."

A delegation of strikers

travelled to Blackpool for a rally at the TUC on Tuesday.

"There's a lot of enthusiasm," says Steve. "Two inspectors who scabbed on the last strike were out this week.

"I think it's important now that we strike on the same day as Arriva. It would be a big boost for them.

"We are doing collections for them and Aslef reps now have the collection sheets."

The executive of Aslef was to meet this week to discuss further action on First North Western.

Stop the war

OVER 150 people attended a showing of the *Not In My Name* video in Liverpool last week.

Forthcoming anti-war meetings include:

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER
SOUTHEND: with Jeremy Corbyn, Lindsey German and *Not In My Name* video, 7.30pm, Labour Hall, Cambridge Road.
CHESTERFIELD: with Mike Marqusee, 7pm, Assembly Rooms, Market Hall, Market Square.

FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER
BERWICK-UPON-TWEED: with Donny Gluckstein and others, 7.30pm, St Aidan's Peace Church, Church Street.

LEEDS: with Alan Simpson MP and Lindsey German, 7.30pm, Room 22, Roger Stevens Building, Leeds University.

TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER
HACKNEY: with Paul Foot (invited) and Asad Rehman, 7.30pm, Bullion Rooms (behind Hackney Empire).

BIRMINGHAM: with Yvonne Ridley, Cole Morton, Mike Marqusee and *Not In My Name* video, 7.30pm, Cars Lane Church.

KENSINGTON, CHELSEA & WESTMINSTER: with Tariq Ali, Lindsey German, councillor Pat Mason and civil rights lawyer Kevin Cobham, 7.30pm, Paddington Arts Centre, Woodfield Road, (Westbourne Park ☺).

WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER
NORTHAMPTON: with Tony Clarke MP and others, 7.30pm,

Friends Meeting House, Wellington Street.

THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER
BURNLEY: with George Galloway MP, Yvonne Ridley and John Rees, 7.30pm, Friendship Centre, Burnley Lane Baptist Church Hall, Colne Road.

ISLINGTON: with Lindsey German, Jeremy Corbyn and *Not In My Name* video, 7.30pm, Union Chapel, Compton Terrace (Highbury and Islington ☺).

TWICKENHAM: *Not In My Name* video introduced by Chris Nineham, 7.30pm, Green Room, Etna Community Centre, 13 Rosslyn Street.

FRIDAY 20 SEPTEMBER
BOLTON: with Asad Rehman, George Galloway and John Rees, 7.30pm, Central Library, Le Mons Crescent.

ST ALBANS: with Kerry Pollard MP and others, 7.30pm, Trinity Church, Victoria Street/Beaconsfield Road.

SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER
BRADFORD: with Lindsey German, Liz Davies and Shahedah Vawda, 3pm, Carlisle Business Centre, Carlisle Road.

NEATH: "Love Music—Hate War" gig, 8pm, Old Town Hall.

SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER
BARNLEY: with George Galloway MP and others, 7pm, Cooper Art Gallery.

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
MERSEYSIDE: with Arthur Scargill, Lindsey German, Bruce Kent, Felicity Arbutnot and Bob Wareing MP, 7.30pm, Gladstone Hotel, Liverpool (behind Lime Street ☺).

Caparo

WORKERS AT Caparo steel works are at the forefront of the battle to defend "final salary" pension schemes. Crucially, they are not just talking—they are fighting.

The campaign over pensions has taken huge publicity at the TUC this week.

Caparo workers in Tredgar, Scunthorpe and Wrexham have held a series of one-day strikes. Now they are escalating to striking two days a week.

An example of why they are taking action is the experience

of Ken Holly. He is 58 years old and has worked at the Tredgar plant for 18 years.

He expected a £100 weekly pension when he retired, but that is no longer secure.

Caparo wants him to risk his money on a share-based scheme that would go up and down with the stockmarket.

Ken says, "At our level, we can't afford to gamble with our old age pension. People feel very unhappy. We feel bitter."

Ken is also angry at Labour's national leaders.

EMAP

JOURNALISTS at EMAP Healthcare/PSM in London are considering further action after their one-day strike.

Union members were told by national NUJ officials last week that an approach had been made by the conciliation service ACAS over the dispute. Branch members agreed to pursue this avenue to see if anything resulted.

However, they also voted for further industrial action if necessary in order to keep up pressure on management.

■Send messages of support to tashshifrin@hotmail.com

Simon Jones campaign

ALL CHARGES against the five protesters who occupied the Shoreham docks of Euromin to highlight the corporate killing of Simon Jones have been dropped.

The Crown Prosecution Service has announced that it considers it is not in the public interest to proceed with the prosecutions.

The accused faced a maximum sentence of six months in jail if found guilty following a protest at the dock on 3 December 2001.

Simon's mother, Anne Jones, and others were to give evidence at the trial about the

appalling lack of safety at Euromin's dock.

Colin Chalmers of the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign says, "We're glad that the CPS has finally realised that the people protesting against this death trap of a dock aren't the criminals here."

Lydia Dagostino, the solicitor representing the five accused, said, "This is a small but important victory in an ongoing campaign against those who killed Simon Jones."

"This case highlights that direct action and peaceful protest still have an important role to play."

Anti-Nazi and anti-racist

SUPPORTERS OF the Anti-Nazi League launched a leafletting campaign in Brislington, in Bristol, after the area was targeted by the Nazi BNP.

The Nazis distributed their propaganda after a local meeting with BNP leader Griffin.

ANL member Matt Smith said, "We had a lot of complaints after the Nazis were handing out their newsletter to kids in the street as young as seven. Many people objected to having BNP material through their doors."

"There is not a huge BNP organisation yet in Bristol but it is clear that they are trying to

grow. "We have handed out several hundred leaflets and we had a good response.

People came out of their houses to thank us."

□THE BNP has announced that it is to stand in the election for mayor due to take place in Stoke-on-Trent in Staffordshire, due to take place on Thursday 17 October.

The Nazis came within 72 votes of winning the Longton North ward in last May's council elections.

Anti-Nazis are organising leafletting and stalls in a "Don't Vote Nazi" campaign.

Barking

A WAVE of outrage has swept Barking, east London, following a vicious racist attack.

Rasiah Shanmugasuntaram, originally from Sri Lanka, was walking home from his job when he was set upon by a ten-strong gang of white youths.

They beat him mercilessly with an iron bar until he lay unconscious.

Rasiah was left seriously injured, needing eight stitches in his head.

Disgracefully, as a result of his injuries he has now been

sacked from his job.

Anti-racists on Rasiah's estate moved quickly to organise a response.

Last Saturday hundreds of shoppers, black and white, signed a petition condemning the attack.

Campaigners were told of many other racist incidents that have occurred recently, including the stabbing of a black market trader.

There are now plans for a public meeting.

YURI PRASAD

Socialist Worker

Nuclear firm gets bailed out by New Labour

‘Maniac’ in the Home Office

Blunkett targets abuse at Asians

HOME SECRETARY David Blunkett has stooped to a new low with a disgusting attack on young Asian men in Bradford who have been given outrageously long prison sentences.

He described them in a speech last week as “maniacs” who should stop “whining” about receiving jail terms of up to eight and half years.

He has already blamed divisions in the north west of England on Asians “segregating themselves” rather than on the racist discrimination.

Blunkett’s latest comments were reported on Friday, the same day that two of the scum suspected of murdering black teenager Stephen Lawrence were jailed for another racist attack.

Neil Acourt and David Norris got 18 months for trying to run down an off-duty black police officer on the same road in Eltham where Stephen was murdered.

Yet Blunkett targeted his abuse at Asians who were defending themselves against racism and have been jailed for three to five times longer than them.

Twenty eight young Asian men from Burnley are on trial after they defended their community from invasion by a white racist gang last year. Defence lawyers rightly argue Blunkett’s comments will prejudice the jury, which contains no black or Asian people.

Sal Lal from the Bradford Fair Justice Campaign told *Socialist Worker*:

“We have written to Blunkett demanding an apology.

“His comments are like a slap in the face. He is saying we have no right to complain.

“But we are getting more and more support from people in Bradford and in other cities from Hull to

‘His message is do not dare to fight back against racism’

London.

“We won’t be put off.”

Bradford judge Stephen Gullick says his unprecedented jail sentences do not take account of what people did or didn’t do.

He told two men as he jailed them, “The charge includes not only the actions of individual defendants such as yourselves, but also the unlawful conduct of all those around you as well.”

Blunkett says the jail terms are designed to send a signal to “the community”.

The message is, “Do not dare to fight back against racism.”

The disturbances broke out in Bradford last year when police allowed known Nazis to gather in the city centre after the National Front called a rally.

They included notorious Nazi thug David Appleyard. He got a lower sentence for kicking off the day’s disturbances than the Asians who defended themselves against racists and the police.

Bradford came after similar Nazi-inspired confrontations in Oldham and Burnley,



POLICE WADED into those who defended themselves from the National Front’s rampage through Bradford in July

both towns that were targeted by the British National Party (BNP).

Asian youth in Burnley took to the streets only after a white racist gang had attacked people and property, and was being given a police escort into the main Asian area.

Police hit Shahid Malik, a member of Labour’s National Executive Committee, with a shield, knocking him out.

Does Blunkett consider

him a “maniac”?

Blunkett revels in portraying himself as a “hard” home secretary.

He sounded like far right Tory Norman Tebbit last week when he attacked “bleeding heart liberals”.

Sickeningly Blunkett spewed out his bile just a week after the racist killing of Iranian asylum seeker Peiman Bahmani in Sunderland. There were no words

like “maniacs” from Blunkett to describe his killers.

Blunkett made his outburst last week at a meeting of the Federation of Small Businesses.

He had nothing to say about the federation’s former UK policy director Donald Martin who was forced to resign last year after a campaign by anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*.

Martin sold anti-Semitic

tracts such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* through his Bloomfield Books business.

Blunkett believes he can shore up New Labour’s vote by adapting to the language of the racists.

That is music to the ears of the BNP.

■**Phone the Burnley campaign on 07930 869 895 and the Bradford campaign on 07966 215 696.**

THE GOVERNMENT has agreed a £410 million bailout for Britain’s biggest electricity generator, which threatened to let its nuclear power plants go bankrupt last week.

British Energy provides 25 percent of electricity in Britain. It said on Thursday of last week it faced bankruptcy. Only three weeks previously it had insisted there was “no financial crisis”.

The company was formed when the Tory government sold off the electricity industry in 1990.

Its collapse ought to sound the death knell for privatisation.

But a government insider told the *Financial Times*, “The company has been aggressive with ministers. But there’s not a feeling of ‘We’re going to get our own back’.”

The government is to leave electricity in private hands.

It is handing over £410 million without question, even though British Energy paid out £50 million to shareholders just a few months ago.

This latest collapse comes after the bankruptcy of Railtrack and the deepening crisis at National Air Traffic Services, which was privatised by New Labour.

British Energy sank into crisis because privatisation has led to “overcapacity” in the generation of electricity.

Its nuclear power stations are far more expensive than producing electricity from coal, leaving aside how dangerous they are.

The nuclear power stations only exist because they produce the raw material for nuclear weapons.

They were also part of the Tory government’s drive to reduce coal use so it could massacre the miners.

Madness

British Energy lost money as the price of electricity fell.

Under the madness of privatisation that has meant more public money going in to bail the company out.

The nationalised electricity industry aimed at always having a reserve margin of supply of 24 percent, so it could cope with sudden surges of demand.

That is the same amount of “overcapacity” today.

But now it means bankruptcies, job losses, attacks on pensions and huge subsidies from the government for greedy directors and shareholders.

■**THE BOSSES at Railtrack have just received the first half of £6.7 million bonus payments.**

One of the biggest winners is Richard Middleton, engineering director, who was responsible for the disastrous West Coast Mainline upgrade.

He will pick up a £100,000 “loyalty bonus” even though he left the company last Friday after failing to get a job in Railtrack’s successor, Network Rail.

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